



For immediate release
February 5, 2001

Contact: Kristi Jamison
(573) 526-2423

Missouri Department of
Economic Development
P.O. Box 1157
Jefferson City, Missouri
65102-1157
Media Information and Research Site:
www.ecodev.state.mo.us/ded/

Rapid Response Team activated to aid St. Joseph Light & Power Company employees

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. -- The state Rapid Response Team has been activated to help workers that will be dislocated by layoffs at the St. Joseph Light & Power Co. in St. Joseph, Mo.

The Rapid Response Team, composed of representatives from the Department of Economic Development's (DED) Division of Workforce Development (DWD), the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the Workforce Investment Board's Missouri Career Center in northwest Missouri, responds to the needs of workers who have lost or will lose their jobs by providing special training and re-employment services.

Joseph L. Driskill, director of the Department of Economic Development, has directed DWD to assist St. Joseph Light & Power Co. employees by offering Missouri Career Center services.

"It is imperative that we provide these workers with comprehensive re-employment services and constructive job training assistance to help them find suitable employment as quickly as possible," Driskill said. "The Rapid Response Team will explain how and where they these individuals can find this cost-free support."

The Rapid Response Team and the local Missouri Career Center will provide immediate services to workers needing assistance, including assessment and testing, career counseling and resume writing, interviewing skills, job search methods, on-the-job training and tuition assistance for vocational training or education.

Representatives from DWD and the Missouri Career Center in the northwest region are working with the company to ensure that workers have access to these free services. Meetings will be held with these individuals at 9 and 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 6, at the company's facility to explain how these services can help them find a new job.

Approximately 70 employees will be laid off as the utility company restructures following the merger between Kansas City-based Utilicorp United and St. Joseph Light & Power Co.

"As the economy slows following an unprecedented eight-year expansion, many companies are restructuring, often through mergers, in order to remain competitive," Driskill said. "Unfortunately these changes can have an adverse affect on some employees. I encourage area employers that are in need of employees to consider hiring these hard working individuals."

Employers interested in hiring St. Joseph Light and Power Co. workers can call **1-800-877-8698**.

Since 1983 -- when Missouri's dislocated worker program was established -- more than 100,000 dislocated workers have participated in the program. Approximately 80 percent of the people assisted by the program find new employment.

Laid-off workers interested in the training and re-employment services offered through the Rapid Response Team can call **DWD at 1-800-877-8698 or the Missouri Career Center in the northwest region at 816/387-2380**.